action. The High Courts have been requested to implement the recommendations of the Malimath Committee to streamline procedure which will, *inter-alia,* expedite disposal of pending cases. Further, the Government have also been constantly reviewing the accumulation of arears in courts. Besides increasing the judge strength from time to time, the Government have set up/encouraged alternative modes of dispute resolution including conciliation, mediation and arbitration. Special tribunals like Central Administrative Tribunal, State Administrative Tribunals, Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, Labour Courts, Consumer Courts etc., have been set up to expedite the disposal of cases. Information Technology is being used in generation of causelists, providing information to the Litigants/ Advocates etc., for speedy disposal of cases. A pilot project has been started for computerisation of City Courts in the four major metro cities of Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai.

Civil Procedure Code has been amended and the amendments have been brought into force with effect from 01.07.2002 which *inter-alia,* limit the number of adjournments which can be granted to a party to provide for speedy process service by speed post, courier services, fax or e-mail, authorise the court to fix time limit for oral arguments and to provide for a number of other measures aimed at ensuring expeditious disposal of cases.

(d) No time-frame can be fixed for disposal of civil cases pending for more than 5 years as this relates to substantive function of the Judiciary.

Proposal to increase the strength of judges

540. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRIJ.CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked the State Governments to come with the proposals to increase the strength of judges by five times per million population as per the directions of the Supreme Court; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the response of the State Government, so far?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. JANA KRISHNAMURTHI): (a) and (b)The Supreme Court, in its judgement of

21st March, 2002, in All India Judges' Association & Ors. *Vs.* Union of India & Ors. has directed that an increase in the judge strength from the existing ratio of 10.5 or 13 per 10 lakh people to 50 judges per 10 lakh people should be effected and implemented within a period of five years in a phased manner to be determined and directed by the Union Ministry of Law. The Apex Court has further directed that the States as well as the .Union of India shall submit their compliance report by the 30th September, 2002.

Accordingly, the Central Government, *vide* letter dated the 25th June, 2002, have addressed the State Governments for taking necessary action to increase the judge strength as per the direction of the Supreme Court. No State Government has responded so far.

Cases pending with various High Courts, Civil Courts and Lower Courts

541. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of cases pending with the various High Courts, Civil Courts and Lower Courts in the country uptil now;

(b) whether shortage of Judges has been considered the main reasons for delay in the judgement in such cases;

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to urge the courts to expedite these cases immediately; and

(d) the concrete steps Government propose to take to meet the situation and also to reduce the arrears in various courts in the country?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. JANA KRISHNAMURTHI): (a) The total number of cases pending with the various High Courts and District/Lower Courts are at Statement I and II as per available information (See below).